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DAVID CRUZ ALBERT OLAZABA
Friendly Neighborhood
SPIDER-MAN
RINGO! KESEL

MASKS

PART 1 OF 2

PETER DAVID | ROGER CRUZ | DECLAIR ALBERT & VICTOR OLAZABA | CHRIS SOTOMAYOR | VC'S CORY PETIT | MICHAEL O'CONNOR | AXEL ALONSO | JOE QUESADA | DAN BUCKLEY

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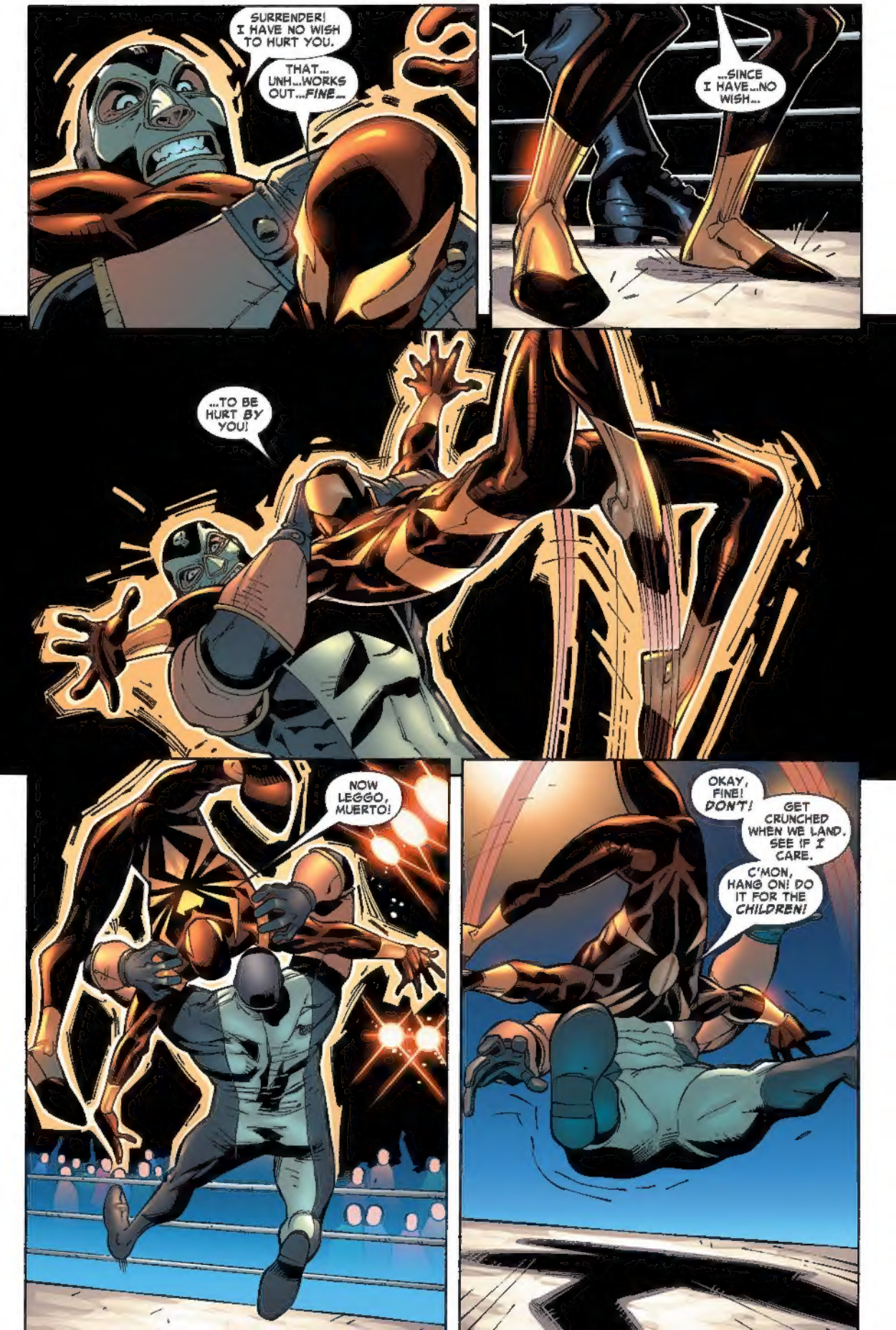
SURRENDER! I HAVE NO WISH TO HURT YOU.
THAT... UNH...WORKS OUT...FINE...
...SINCE I HAVE...NO WISH...
...TO BE HURT BY YOU!
NOW LEGGO, MUERTO!
OKAY, FINE! DON'T!
GET CRUNCHED WHEN WE LAND. SEE IF I CARE.
C'MON, HANG ON! DO IT FOR THE CHILDREN!

AWWWW...
NOW WHAT ARE THE DISAPPOINTED KIDDIES GOING TO SAY?
THEY ARE TO SAY THIS WAS THE DAY...
...THAT EL MUERTO...
...WENT MASCARA CONTRA MASCARA...
...WITH THE SO-CALLED...
...SPIDER-MAN!!!
"YOU'RE DEAD, JAMESON! Y'HEAR ME? DEAD!"

I'M GONNA DO YOU, AND MAKE YOUR SON OVER THERE WATCH!
YOU'RE AN IDIOT! YOU TRIPPED A HALF DOZEN SILENT ALARMS GETTING IN HERE! THE POLICE WILL--
YOU THINK I CARE? MY DAD IS DEAD 'CAUSE OF YOU!
YOUR FATHER WAS CONVICTED FOR SHOOTING A COP AND THE STATE EXECUTED HIM! HOW IS THAT MY FAULT?
YOUR EDITORIALS! THE GOVERNOR MIGHT HAVE PARDONED HIM IF NOT FOR YOUR EDITORIALS SAYING HE SHOULDN'T!
HE WASN'T GOING TO PARDON HIM.
MY DAD HAD REPENTED! BECOME DEVOUT! A MODEL PRISONER, HELPING OTHERS--
LOOK...I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR--
SCREW YOUR SYMPATHY. AND YOU.
SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR SON.
JOHN-JOHN... I THINK...NOW MIGHT BE THE TIME FOR YOU TO...YOU KNOW...
...DO SOMETHING.
PLEASE! I'M BEGGING YOU...DON'T SHOOT!
HE'S GOT MONEY! LOTS OF MONEY! SO DO I! NAME YOUR PRICE!

DAD...I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *TALKING* ABOUT.
JOHN...I WAS THINKING SOMETHING OTHER THAN PLEADING AND BRIBERY.
I KNOW ABOUT...YOUR *OTHER* THING.
SO THIS IS NO TIME TO WORRY ABOUT *SECRETS*...
AND I DON'T CARE. SAY GOOD-NIGHT, GRACIE.
JOHN! PLEASE! *HELP ME!!!*
I DON'T KNOW *HOW!* I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO!!!
OH... DEAR GOD... YOU REALLY *DON'T*.
I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE...THAT THE WALL-CRAWLER AND YOU WERE...

BACK AWAY. THE WEAPONS ARE TO BE PUT DOWN BY YOU!
BLAM!
BLAM!
EXCUSE MY ENGLISH. IS NOT AS WELL AS IT SHOULD BE AND SOMETIMES IS UNCLEAR.
I INSTEAD GO TO USE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF VIOLENCE.
CLEARER?

OOOOFF!!!
THAT...THAT DESK WEIGHS A TON! AND THESE ROPES...
HOW STRONG ARE YOU?! WHO ARE YOU?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I AM CALLED EL MUERTO. YOU WOULD SAY, "THE DEAD." AND I AM... STRONG ENOUGH.
WHAT ARE YOU, LIKE A MEXICAN WRESTLER OR SOMETHING?
EXACTLY SOMETHING LIKE, YES. A LUCHADOR, AS MY FATHER AND HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM.
SPEAKING OF FATHERS...
THANK YOU FOR SAVING MINE. YOU OKAY, DAD?
YEAH, OKAY. JUST... SUSPICIOUS.
SUSPI--?
THE TIMING'S AWFULLY CONVENIENT, THAT THIS GUY SHOWS UP OUT OF NOWHERE TO "SAVE" ME.
NOT FROM "NOWHERE." I HAVE BEEN WATCHING YOU SOME MANY DAYS... TRYING TO FIGURE BEST WAY TO APPROACH. TO ASK FAVOR, OF HELP FROM YOU.
THEN I SAW YOUR DANGER, AND KNEW I WAS OUT OF TIME TO WAIT.
WHAT SORT OF FAVOR?
WELL...

"...TO TELL TRUTH OF IT...I MUST NEED TO DEFEAT SPIDER-MAN. HUMILIATE HIM. YOU PERHAPS COULD SAY...
"...MY LIFE DEPENDS UPON IT."
UNNFFFF!!!
ARHHH!!
NEVER BEEN... HIT SO HARD... IN MY...ENTIRE LIFE...
TRULY?
CAN...BARELY BREATHE...RIBS CRACKED... DON'T...STOP...

...THINKING ABOUT TO-MORRRRRROW...!
...DON'T! STOP! IT'LL SOON BE HEEEERE!
SUCKER.
"NEVER BEEN HIT SO HARD." KIDDO, YOU GOT SOME SERIOUS MUSCLE, I'LL GRANT YOU THAT...
...BUT I'VE BEEN TAP-DANCED ON BY EXPERTS.
BLASTED SHOW-BOATING, WALL-CRAWLING FREAK.
JONAH... YOU KNOW I RESPECT YOU...
LIE TO ME SOME MORE, ROBBIE.
...BUT THIS IS STRANGE BEHAVIOR, EVEN FOR YOU. FOR A WHILE THERE, SPIDER-MAN COULD DO NO WRONG. BUT LATELY YOU'RE BACK TO HATING HIM...
...EVEN SETTING UP THIS CHARITY EVENT IN HOPES OF HUM!--
I THOUGHT HE WAS MY SON.
WHOOPS! MISSED ME AGAIN!
YOU...YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD A SECOND SON, AND THAT HE WAS--
NOT A SECOND. I THOUGHT HE WAS JOHN.
BUT...THEY'VE BEEN SEEN TOGETHER REPEATEDLY! HOW--?
PARKER TALKED ME INTO IT. AND BELIEVE ME...
I'M NOT DONE WITH PARKER YET.
C'MON, SPIDEY...!
GIVE 'IM WHAT FOR!

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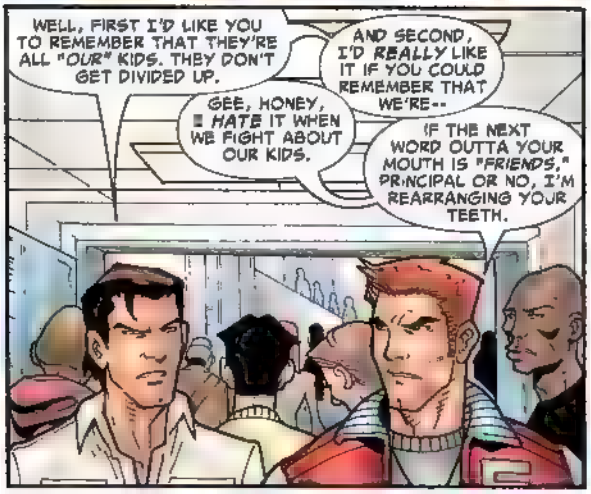
WHAT FOR, HUH?
WELL, BRAD? I ASKED YOU A QUESTION. YOU SHOVED JEREMY HERE INTO A LOCKER, HE'S GOT A BLOODY NOSE NOW. I ASKED YOU "WHAT FOR?"
OR ARE YOU TOO GOOD TO TALK TO TEACHERS NOW?
HE WAS IN MY WAY.
YOUR "WAY?" ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I'M TRYING TO GET INTO A "GOOD HEAD-SPACE," LIKE COACH SAYS.
NOT LET NOBODY GET BETWEEN ME AND WHERE I WANNA GO.
AND THAT MEANS YOU CAN MANHANDLE WHOEVER YOU WANT?
WELL... YEAH. I GUESS.
YEAH, WELL...YOU GUESSED WRONG. AND I'M GOING TO MAKE YOUR COACH EXPLAIN THAT TO Y--
YOU'RE GONNA "MAKE" ME DO STUFF NOW?
Y'KNOW...I THINK I'D REALLY LIKE T'SEE YOU TRY THAT.

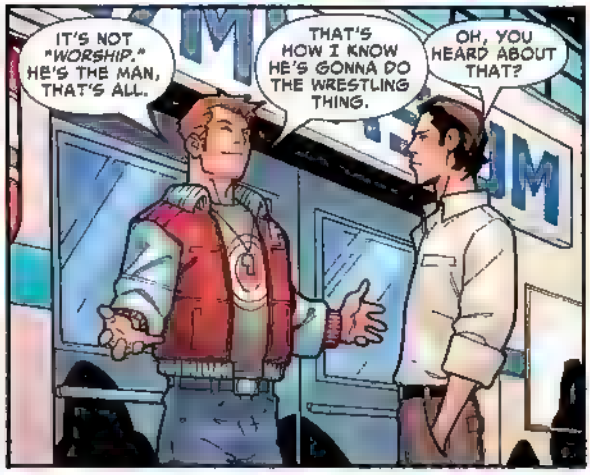
FLASH?!? FLASH THOMPSON?!?
BUT...BUT YOU'RE IN A COMA!
GEE. YOU USED TO BE SOME KINDA SCIENCE WHIZ, PARKER. BUT NOW YOU SEE A GUY STANDING HERE TALKING TO YOU, AND YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL IF HE'S IN A COMA OR NOT.
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
I WORK HERE, PARKER, SAME AS YOU. I'M THE COACH.
YOU WANNA TALK TOUGH TO A KID? BE MY GUEST. LONG AS IT AIN'T ONE OF MY KIDS.
IF IT'S ONE OF MY KIDS, THEN YOU TALK TO ME. SAVVY?
AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THEN YOU'RE WELCOME T'DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

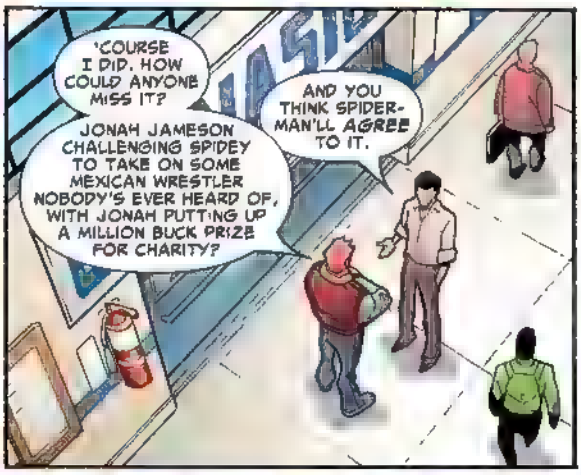
YEAH. FIGURES THIS IS WHAT PANTY-WAIST PARKER WOULD DO.
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE
ROGER, HOW COULD YOU HIRE HIM? FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, HE'S BRAIN-DAMAGED!
LIKE MY HIGH SCHOOL COACH WASN'T.
THIS ISN'T A JOKE: HE'S CALLING ME A "PANTYWAIST," FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
IS "FRUITY" BETTER?
HE DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER WE WERE FRIENDS! GOOD FRIENDS!
YEAH, RIGHT. ME FRIENDS WITH PANTY-WAIST PARKER. WHAT'D WE DO FOR FUN? GO OUT CRUISING FOR NERDS?
NOT EXACTLY, NO.
WHO'S THE BABE?
MARY JANE. MY WIFE.
GOOD ONE. ALMOST GOT ME THERE.
WHY NOT TELL ME YOU'RE SPIDER-MAN WHILE YOU'RE AT IT?

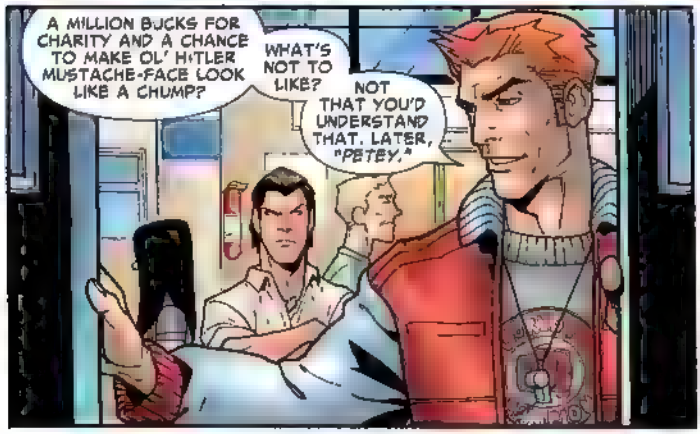
FLASH. WAIT UP.
AW, GEEZ. LOOK, PARKER, I *TOLD* THE PRINCIPAL I'D TALK TO MY KID, SET 'IM STRAIGHT. WHAT *MORE* DO YOU WANT?


WELL, FIRST I'D LIKE YOU TO REMEMBER THAT THEY'RE ALL "*OUR*" KIDS. THEY DON'T GET DIVIDED UP.
AND SECOND, I'D *REALLY* LIKE IT IF YOU COULD REMEMBER THAT WE'RE--
GEE, HONEY, I *HATE* IT WHEN WE FIGHT ABOUT OUR KIDS.
IF THE NEXT WORD OUTTA YOUR MOUTH IS "*FRIENDS*," PRINCIPAL OR NO, I'M REARRANGING YOUR TEETH.

YOU KNOW WHAT? IT FIGURES THAT YEARS WORTH OF YOUR MEMORIES COULD BE WIPED OUT... BUT YOUR SPIDER-MAN HERO WORSHIP IS INTACT.


IT'S NOT "*WORSHIP*." HE'S THE MAN, THAT'S ALL.
THAT'S HOW I KNOW HE'S GONNA DO THE WRESTLING THING.
OH, YOU HEARD ABOUT THAT?

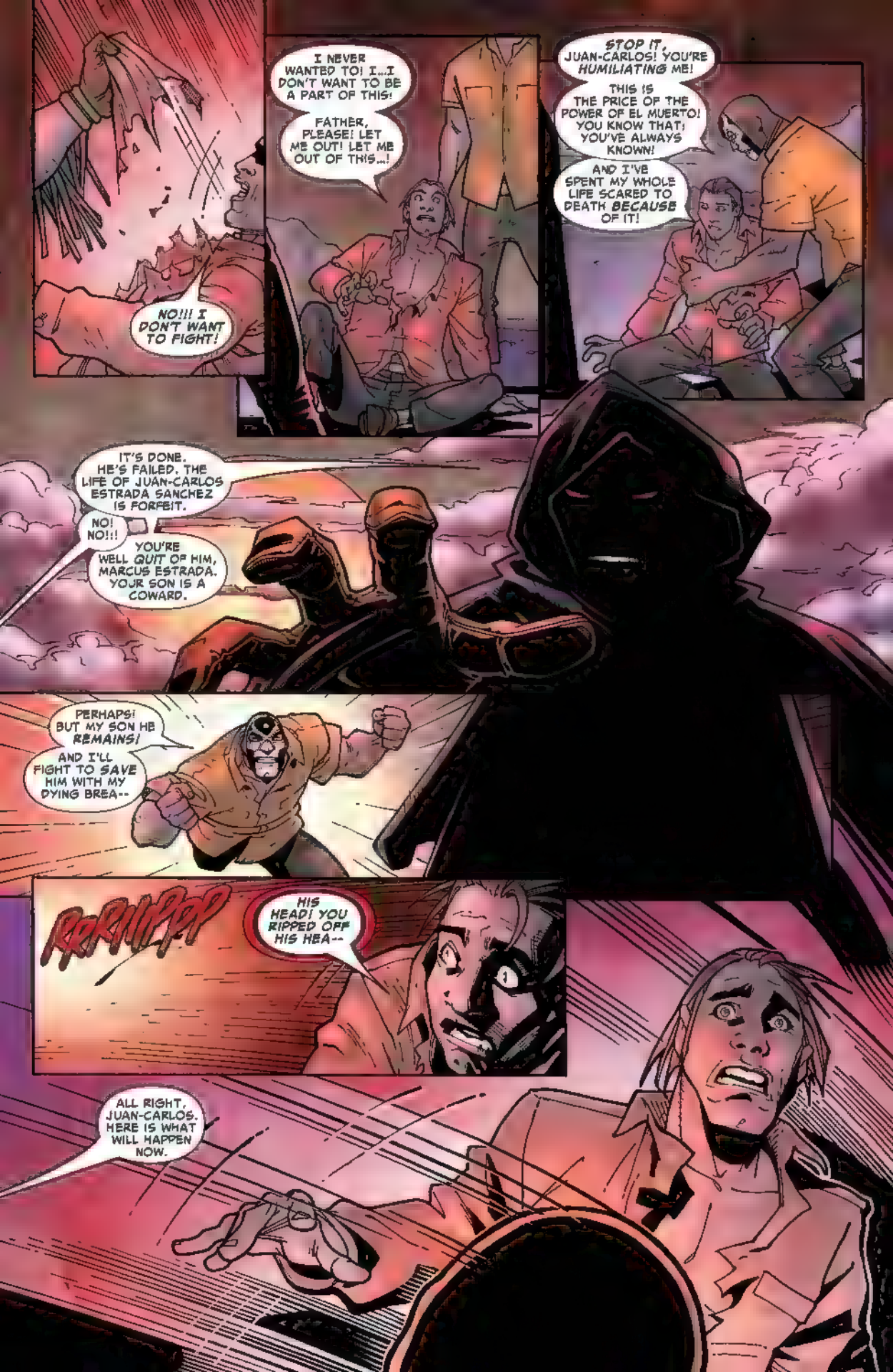

'COURSE I DID. HOW COULD ANYONE MISS IT?
JONAH JAMESON CHALLENGING SPIDEY TO TAKE ON SOME MEXICAN WRESTLER NOBODY'S EVER HEARD OF, WITH JONAH PUTTING UP A MILLION BUCK PRIZE FOR CHARITY?
AND YOU THINK SPIDER-MAN'LL *AGREE* TO IT.


A MILLION BUCKS FOR CHARITY AND A CHANCE TO MAKE OL' HITLER MUSTACHE-FACE LOOK LIKE A CHUMP?
WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?
NOT THAT YOU'D UNDERSTAND THAT. LATER, "*PETEY*."

HUNH.

HUNH?
WHOA!
OKAY, THIS...
...ISN'T FUNNY...
...ANYM--
UNFFFFF!!!!
SURRENDER!
NOT... UNH...GONNA HAPPEN!
"SURRENDER, MARCUS ESTRADA DE LA GARCIA. SURRENDER YOUR MASK...OR YOUR SON'S LIFE."

DID YOU HEAR ME, ESTRADA? I SAID--
I HEARD YOU, GILDED ONE.
THEN YOU KNOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU...JUST AS IT DID FOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR FATHER BEFORE YOU.
YOU MUST FIGHT TO KEEP THE MASK OF EL MUERTO... THE MASK, AND THE POWERS IT ENTAILS.
OR RATHER...
...YOUR SON MUST DO SO.
IS HE READY?
JUAN-CARLOS IS INDEED READY. I HAVE TRAINED HIM HIS WHOLE LIFE FOR THIS MOMENT.
GO, MY SON. MAKE ME PROUD.
I...
YOUR NOSE MUST BE CLOGGED, MARCUS ESTRADA. HOW ELSE CAN YOU NOT SMELL THE STINK OF FEAR?
YOU'RE WRONG.
I'M RIGHT. COME, BOY! DEFEAT ME IF YOU CAN! SHOW ME YOUR MOVES! SHOW ME--


NO!!! I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT!
I NEVER WANTED TO! I...I DON'T WANT TO BE A PART OF THIS!
FATHER, PLEASE! LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT OF THIS...!
STOP IT, JUAN-CARLOS! YOU'RE HUMILIATING ME!
THIS IS THE PRICE OF THE POWER OF EL MUERTO! YOU KNOW THAT! YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN!
AND I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE SCARED TO DEATH BECAUSE OF IT!
IT'S DONE. HE'S FAILED. THE LIFE OF JUAN-CARLOS ESTRADA SANCHEZ IS FORFEIT.
NO! NO!!!
YOU'RE WELL QUIT OF HIM, MARCUS ESTRADA. YOUR SON IS A COWARD.
PERHAPS! BUT MY SON HE REMAINS!
AND I'LL FIGHT TO SAVE HIM WITH MY DYING BREA--
RRRIIIPP
HIS HEAD! YOU RIPPED OFF HIS HEA--
ALL RIGHT, JUAN-CARLOS. HERE IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW.

"OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOUR FATHER'S BRAVERY, YOU HAVE TEN YEARS. TEN YEARS TO TRAIN. TO TRAVEL. TO FIND YOUR BRAVERY, IF SUCH IS POSSIBLE.

DAILY BUGLE

MANO A MANO

SPIDER-MAN CHALLENGED

NO WEBS! JUST SKILL!

"AT THE END OF THAT TIME, YOU MUST FIND A MASKED HERO--A TRUE CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE--AND HUMILIATE AND UNMASK HIM PUBLICLY.

"SHOULD YOU DO SO, THE SCALES WILL BE BALANCED. YOUR COWARDICE EXPUNGED.

"IF YOU FAIL...YOUR LIFE IS FORFEIT."

A MASKED WRESTLER. NOW HE'S *REALLY* GETTING DESPERATE.

WEBS! SKILL!

WHAT DO YOU THINK? I MEAN, A MILLION BUCKS FOR CHARITY. THAT'D HELP A LOT OF HOMELESS PEOPLE...

PLUS, YOU KNOW *JAMESON*. HE GETS A STICK IN HIS MOUTH, HE WON'T LET GO. IF I JUST IGNORE THIS, HE'LL KEEP IT UP FOR MONTHS.

PEOPLE WILL START THINKING I'M *AFRAID* OF THE GUY.

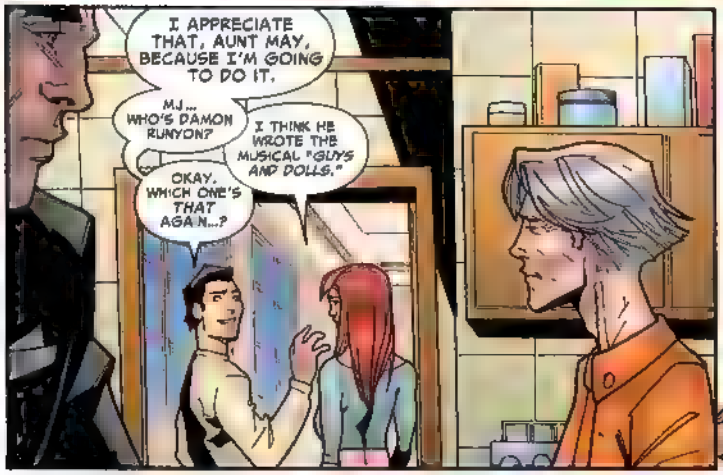
TRUE. BESIDES, YOU CAN TAKE HIM EASY, RIGHT, MAY?

RIGHT?

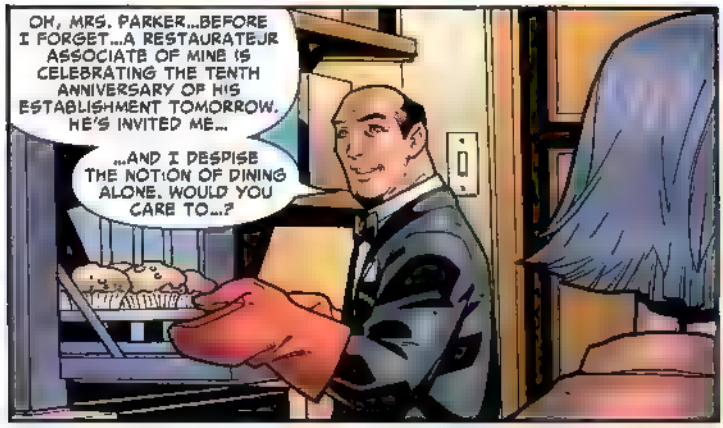
"WHEN I WAS YOUNG, ABOUT TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD, MY FATHER SAID A VERY VALUABLE THING. HE SAID, 'ONE OF THESE DAYS IN YOUR TRAVELS, A GUY IS GOING TO COME UP TO YOU AND SHOW YOU A NICE BRAND-NEW SEALED DECK OF CARDS.
"'AND THIS GUY IS GOING TO OFFER TO BET YOU THAT HE CAN MAKE THE JACK OF SPADES JUMP OUT OF THE DECK AND SQUIRT CIDER IN YOUR EAR.

"'DO NOT BET THIS MAN, FOR AS SURE AS YOU ARE STANDING THERE, YOU ARE GOING TO END UP WITH AN EARFUL OF CIDER.'"
AH. THE CLASSIC WRITINGS OF DAMON RUNYON.
THE POINT IS, PETER...

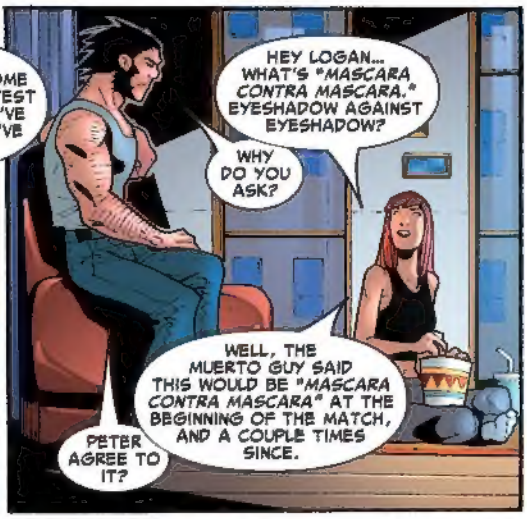
I'VE SEEN YOU FIGHT FOR MANY CAUSES, ALL OF THEM NOBLE.
BUT I'LL SUPPORT YOUR DECISION, NO MATTER WHAT.
GET INTO A FIGHT BECAUSE OF EGO, YOU'LL WIND UP WITH A SOGGY EAR.


I APPRECIATE THAT, AUNT MAY, BECAUSE I'M GOING TO DO IT.
MJ... WHO'S DAMON RUNYON?
I THINK HE WROTE THE MUSICAL "GUYS AND DOLLS."
OKAY. WHICH ONE'S THAT AGAIN...?

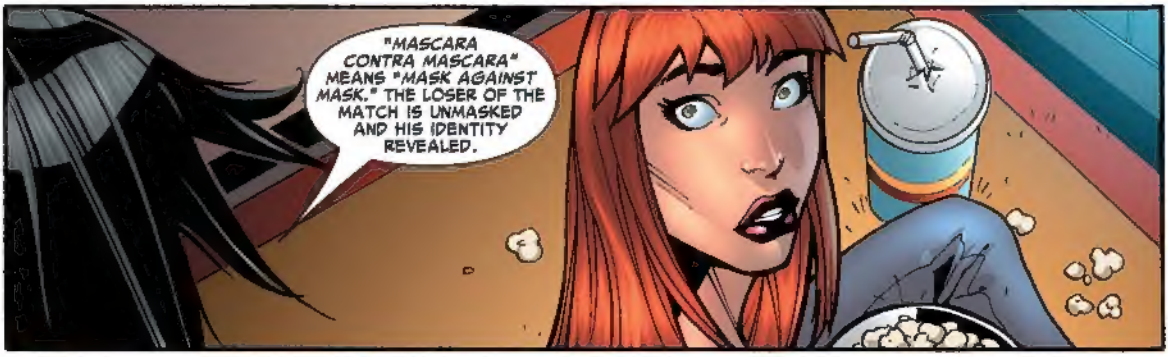
ARE YOU ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE?
STRICTLY IN A SOCIAL SENSE... YES, I BELIEVE I AM.
I'D BE HONORED, JARVIS.
AS WOULD I, MAY.
OH, GOOD.


OH, MRS. PARKER...BEFORE I FORGET...A RESTAURATEUR ASSOCIATE OF MINE IS CELEBRATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ESTABLISHMENT TOMORROW. HE'S INVITED ME...
...AND I DESPISE THE NOTION OF DINING ALONE. WOULD YOU CARE TO...?

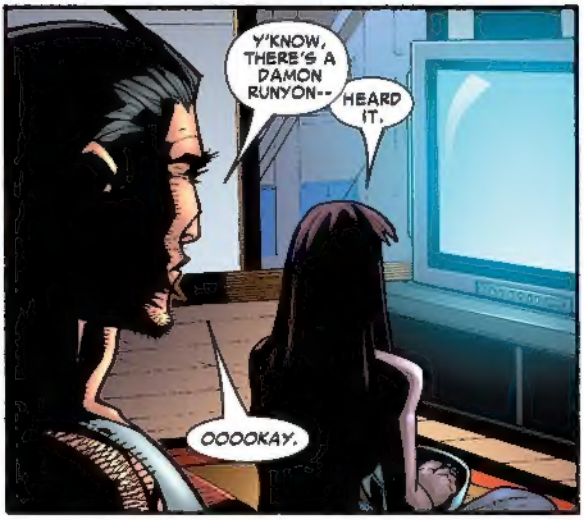
"I'M SURE THE YOUNGSTERS WILL FIND SOME WAY TO ENTERTAIN THEMSELVES."
SO WHO'S WINNING?
YOU TELL ME.
WELL, THE MEXICAN'S GOT SOME GOOD MOVES. FASTEST AND STRONGEST I'VE EVER SEEN, AND I'VE SEEN PLENTY.

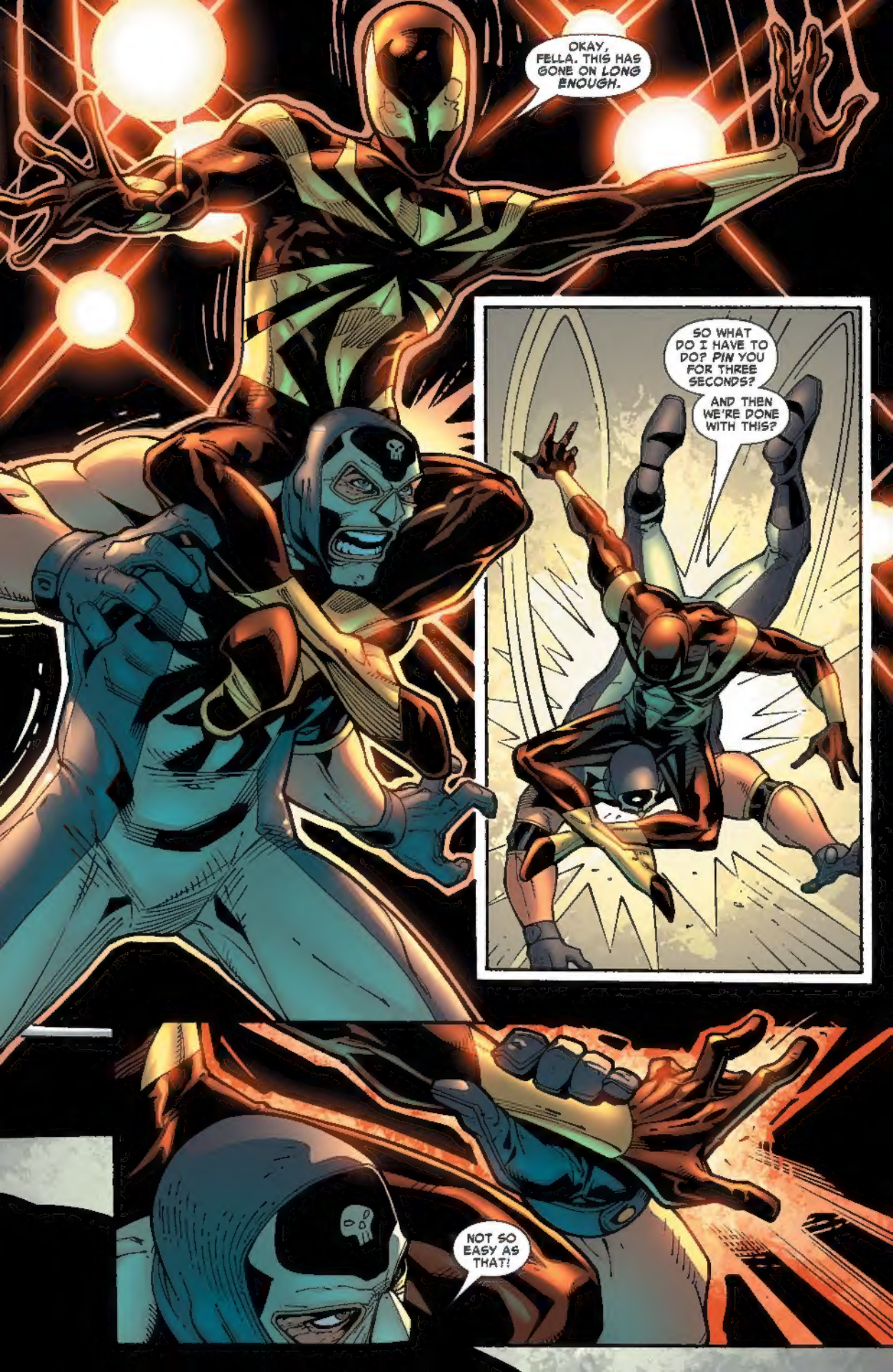

HEY LOGAN... WHAT'S "MASCARA CONTRA MASCARA." EYESHADOW AGAINST EYESHADOW?
WHY DO YOU ASK?
WELL, THE MUERTO GUY SAID THIS WOULD BE "MASCARA CONTRA MASCARA" AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MATCH, AND A COUPLE TIMES SINCE.
PETER AGREE TO IT?

YEAH. HE KINDA SAID, "SURE, WHATEVER."
WELL, THAT WAS BRIGHT.


"MASCARA CONTRA MASCARA" MEANS "MASK AGAINST MASK." THE LOSER OF THE MATCH IS UNMASKED AND HIS IDENTITY REVEALED.

YES, WELL... IT DOESN'T MATTER. PETER CAN TAKE THIS GUY, NO PROBLEM. HE'D NEVER HAVE AGREED TO IT IF WE WEREN'T POSITIVE.
UH-HUH.
I'M NOT AT ALL WORRIED. IT'S A SURE THING.


Y'KNOW, THERE'S A DAMON RUNYON--
HEARD IT.
OOOOKAY.


OKAY, FELLA. THIS HAS GONE ON *LONG* ENOUGH.
SO WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO? *PIN* YOU FOR THREE SECONDS?
AND THEN WE'RE DONE WITH THIS?
NOT SO EASY AS THAT!

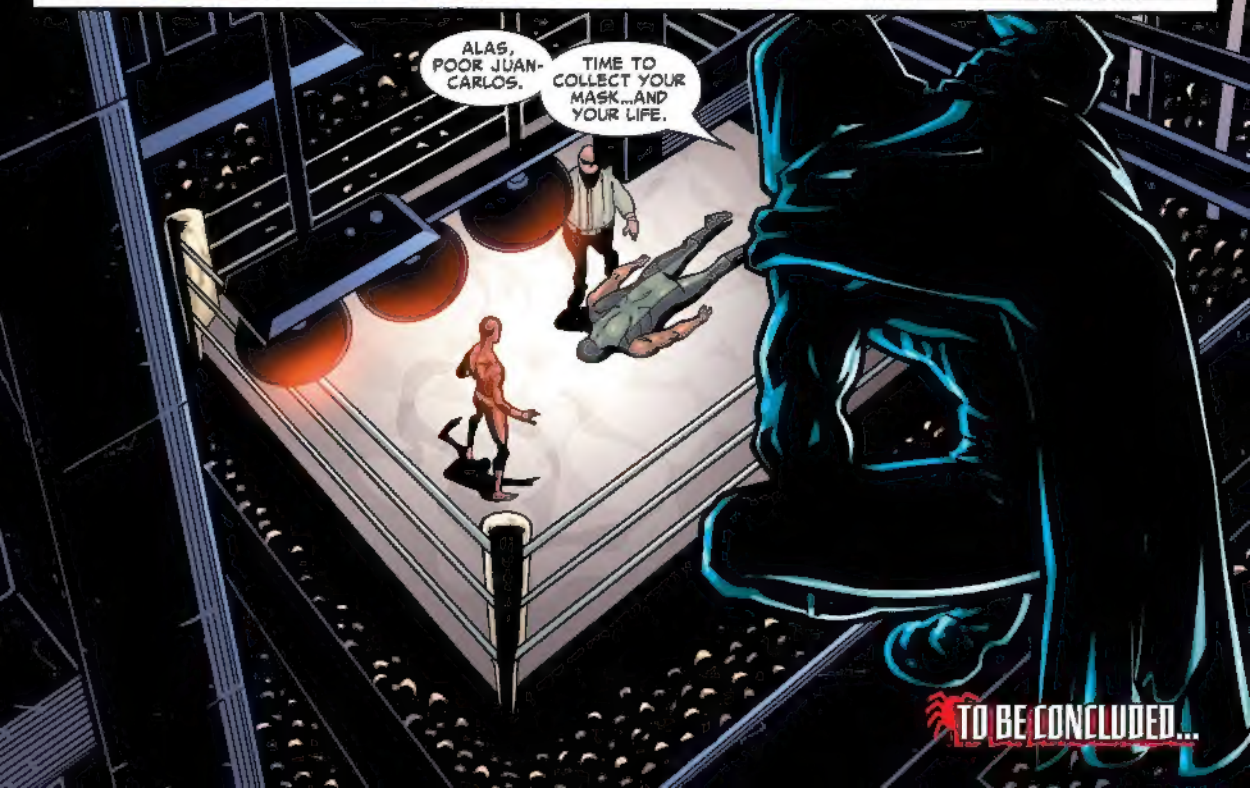
YOU FIGHT WELL. BUT I FIGHT MORE WELL.
YOU REALIZE...IF I USED MY WEBS... THIS IS OVER BEFORE IT BEGINS...
IT ISN'T MATTER WHY YOU LOSE...SO LONG AS YOU DO.
"LOSE?" LOOK, FELLA, YOU'RE...STRONG... I'LL GIVE YOU THAT...BUT...
NO BUT.
I WILL WIN...YOU WILL BE UNMASKED... AND I--
"UNMASKED?!" SINCE WHEN--?
SINCE... NOW!
ARRHHHH!!!

WHA-WHAT DID YOU...DO TO...?
IT WAS INVOLUNTARY! I...

SPIDER-MAN CHEATED! HE HAD A KNIFE IN HIS SLEEVE! I SAW IT!

FATHER... I'M...SORRY... SO...SO SORR--

OOOOFF...


ALAS, POOR JUAN-CARLOS.
TIME TO COLLECT YOUR MASK...AND YOUR LIFE.
TO BE CONCLUDED...